



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Luis A Reyes Jr., CEO

lreyes@kitcarson.com

Richard Martinez, COO

rmartinez@kitcarson.com

KCEC Wildfire Mitigation Update: August 1, 2025

Taos, NM – Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC) is closely monitoring all weather patterns and wildfire conditions across its service territory as part of its ongoing wildfire mitigation efforts. With the increasing threat of wildfires due to persistent drought and dry weather in northern New Mexico, KCEC is taking proactive steps to protect its infrastructure, members, and the communities it serves. The cooperative is committed to prioritizing safety in every decision, including system inspections, vegetation management, non-reclose operations and emergency preparedness. KCEC asks for members' continued patience and understanding as response times or service interruptions may occur during periods of heightened fire risk. Ensuring the safety of our communities remains KCEC's highest priority as we work together to stay resilient through this wildfire season.

As of late July 2025, wildfire activity in Carson National Forest remains minimal, with no recent large fires reported. The only notable incident was the Ojitos Fire detected on June 24, 2025, in Cibola County north of Taos between San Cristobal and Lama. It was first observed at roughly 4:11 p.m., involved 2 acres officially burned, and has not had updates beyond three days, suggesting the incident is inactive. Fire resources, including personnel from Carson National Forest and local volunteer fire departments, responded quickly with engines, brush trucks, and water tenders to contain the blaze in its early stages. The Ojitos fire was caused by lightning.

Meanwhile, across New Mexico, several major wildfires remain active. The Laguna Fire in the Santa Fe National Forest has scorched over 17,413 acres and is roughly 78% contained. The Turkeyfeather Fire in the Gila National Forest has burned more than 24,000 acres and is about 25% contained, while the Goose Fire in Gila is nearing 3,700 acres with containment around 47%; both fires are lightning-caused and are being actively managed under designated closure orders for public safety.

"New Mexico is experiencing extremely dry weather and elevated fire danger across the state," says Luis A. Reyes Jr., CEO of Kit Carson Electric Cooperative. "KCEC is actively monitoring all wildfire activity in the region and taking every precaution necessary to ensure the safety of our communities and the reliability of our electric and internet infrastructure. We remain in close coordination with local, state, and federal agencies as fire conditions evolve."

KCEC uses AiDash, an advanced satellite-based AI platform, to transform its vegetation management around power lines and substations. By combining high-resolution satellite images with AI-driven analytics, AiDash offers real-time, actionable insights into vegetation health and growth patterns, allowing KCEC to implement predictive trim cycles and proactively address high-risk areas. This shift from reactive to data-driven maintenance improves grid reliability, enhances resource allocation, and greatly reduces wildfire risk by detecting potential threats early. Additionally, AiDash aids long-term planning through vegetation regrowth forecasts and regulatory compliance monitoring, reaffirming KCEC's dedication to safety, environmental responsibility, and innovation.

KCEC continues to prioritize the safety of our members and communities by placing forest areas of our service territory on non-reclose operation during high fire risk periods. This means that if a power line experiences a fault, it will remain off until our crews can inspect the line to ensure it is safe to re-energize, reducing the potential for ignition in dry and windy conditions. While this may result in longer outage times, it is a critical step to protect lives, property, and the beautiful landscapes of northern New Mexico during this wildfire season. We appreciate our members' understanding and cooperation as we take every precaution to ensure safety while continuing to provide essential services throughout our communities this summer.

The following areas have been placed on non-reclose:

- Rockwall to Mora County Line
- Chamisal to El Valle and Ojo Sarco
- Idlewild
- Lake View Pines
- Elizabeth Town
- Eagle Nest into Ute Park
- Green Mountain
- Upper Red River
- Hidden Lake
- Black Lake Resorts
- Vallecitos, Canon Plaza
- La Peta, Servilleta, Las Tablas
- Taos Canyon and Valle Escondido

Crews will continue performing maintenance on all circuits (main line and taps). Crews will continue to tighten all hardware, which includes hotline clamps, transformer connections, cross-arm braces, and secondary connections to the weather head on service drops. The circuits that will continue in July are:

- Upper Red River (20% complete)
- Ranchitos Circuit (40% complete)
- Questa (Tree Trimming Service Orders)
- Ute Park (65% complete)
- Lower Llano San Juan and Santa Barbara (90% complete)
- Ojo Sarco and Vallecitos (95% complete)
- Los Pinos (90% complete)
- Taos (Service Orders)

KCEC will continue to provide regular updates to keep our members informed about wildfire conditions, weather impacts, and any operational changes that may affect service. Clear and timely communication is essential, especially during periods of elevated fire risk, and KCEC is committed to ensuring that members have the latest information available. Through our website, social media channels, and member alerts, we will share updates on safety measures, outage responses, and wildfire mitigation efforts. We thank our members for their patience and cooperation as we work together to protect our communities and maintain reliable service.

KCEC is committed to safeguarding our communities and infrastructure through a comprehensive suite of projects focused on wildfire mitigation and grid resilience across our service territory. The current status of KCEC's projects includes:

Amalia II Solar and Battery Facility

KCEC has started construction on the Amalia II Solar + Battery Storage Facility in Amalia, NM. This project will deliver 8.75 megawatts of solar power paired with 8.75 megawatts of battery storage, significantly boosting local energy independence and grid resilience.

Construction officially began on July 7, 2025, with a local job fair hosted on July 11 at the Amalia Community Center to recruit regional talent and foster economic development. As of the reporting period ending July 28, 2025, significant progress was made across several construction fronts. Racking and pier deliveries were received and staged on site, enabling the commencement of foundational work. Grading activities were completed in the critical areas needed for upcoming phases, and mowing operations were successfully carried out in the BESS (Battery Energy Storage System) zone. Pier driving operations officially began, marking a key milestone for structural installation. These activities collectively represent the foundational groundwork necessary to support upcoming racking installations, module placement, and electrical system integration. **Commercial operation date of December 15, 2025**

KCEC Microgrid Projects (Taos Ski Valley, El Rito West, Penasco)

KCEC has submitted 30% of the engineering designs, including adaptations for high-elevation conditions specific to TSV, and the project is progressing toward 60% design completion. A key milestone was achieved with the approval of the NEPA Questionnaire, which lifted previous constraints and cleared the way for procurement and construction to move forward.

Clean Hydrogen Project (Questa, Taos and Penasco)

The current phase of the project involves several critical activities aimed at preparing for the upcoming groundbreaking scheduled for December 1, 2025. Site-specific environmental design work is underway, focusing on tailoring the project to the unique conditions of the location while ensuring long-term sustainability and compliance with environmental regulations. In parallel, pre-construction engineering assessments are being conducted to evaluate structural, geotechnical, and civil aspects of the site. Additionally, a comprehensive quantitative safety and risk analysis is being performed in accordance with standards set by the Department of Energy (DOE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). This analysis aims to identify potential hazards, assess risk levels, and develop mitigation strategies to ensure the safety and compliance of the project throughout its lifecycle. A preliminary engineering design of the solar array, hydrogen facility and substation is also underway.

For further information on wildfire mitigation, KCEC projects or updates, please contact CEO Luis Reyes at lreyes@kitcarson.com or COO Richard Martinez at rmartinez@kitcarson.com. Visit us at kitcarson.com for more details.